

The Arbons

Young family living in a small town
“We’re exhausted most of the time and we want to be healthier”

Ages: 32, 34, 7 and 5
 Household: Couple with two children
 Living: Private renting
 Occupations: Teaching Assistant and Personal Support Worker

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The Arbon family are busy with work, school and childcare but their leisure time is mostly sitting watching TV. Mealtimes are in a rut, where the family often fall back on convenience cooking and takeaways. Everyone lacks energy and it’s hard to be positive and motivated. The tightness of the household budget adds worry for Mum and Dad.

Their eldest comes home from school with a leaflet about **free cookery classes** in the town and later they hear some good things about the classes from other parents. The family are ready to give it a try and joined up to a 4-week cookery class together.

The classes give mealtimes a boost and Mum and Dad are more confident and inspired to cook. There are fewer takeaways and food is more fun. They’re pleased to save money on the food bill and feel more energised.

The Arbons found it was fun to have an activity and the children have since used the **free holiday programme** at the Leisure Centre and now **the family regularly swim** together at the weekends.

The family are feeling happier and healthier and are spending more active time together.

The cookery classes are a project developed by the Councils’ Communities Team in partnership with a local restaurant

The free children’s activities are provided by the Councils through the companies running the leisure centre

The swimming pool is a facility provided by the Councils

Jenny

Jenny is a new mother in housing need

“Having Jack has been a total rethink and too much drama. Now I want a new life where I can stand on my own and Jack is still number one”

Ages: 18
 Family: Living alone with one child
 Living: Renting social housing
 Occupations: Not in education or employed

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Jenny was attending college when she fell pregnant. She decided to have her baby but as her pregnancy progressed, she struggled to keep up her studies as she intended. The travel and study are too much, and she dropped out.

There have been a lot of arguments at home and Jenny stopping her studies led to a big row. Her dad tells her she must move out. She isn't in a relationship with the baby's father and has nowhere permanent to go. Jenny stays on a friend's sofa and contacts the Council for help.

After talking to the team, she moves into a bed and breakfast while they work on a permanent solution. Unfortunately, Jenny and her father are unable to reconcile and by now Jenny is heavily pregnant and things are tough. After a short while Jenny moves into a housing association flat in the nearest town. Her mum visits her most days and is able to help when baby Jack arrives.

Having Jack is amazing (and tiring) and life is more settled and secure. Jenny misses seeing other adults (besides her mother) so she joins a local social media group for mums. Through it she joins a 'new mums coffee morning' that a few of her friends from the group attend.

By the time Jack is 18 months, Jenny is keen to find a part-time job and is worried about not finishing her course. Jenny is helped by her Work Well Suffolk Coach to find an apprenticeship with a firm nearby so she can earn and gain a qualification.

The Housing Solutions Team help people in housing need to find places in private rented and social housing.

The Communities Team worked with the Parish Council to decide what activities were needed in the area and identified social activities for new parents.

The Economic Development Team promote apprenticeships to local business and support them to access apprenticeship schemes

Gladys

A health problem has limited Gladys' social contact and made it hard to manage her home.

"My bad hip has been awful. It's so hard to get around and impossible to see my dancing friends. I'm desperate to get my life back"

Ages: 71
 Family: Lives alone
 Living: Privately owned
 Occupations: Retired

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Gladys recently underwent hip replacement surgery and wanted to return from hospital without delay. She struggles with the stairs and steps around her home, so her family made a referral directly to Council's **Housing Solutions Team** to see if she was eligible for funding to make some minor housing adaptations.

Her application was assessed by the team and she was able to have some changes to her house, like new handrails and a ramp, paid for by the Councils.

Gladys talked to the team about how hard it had been not being able to go to her ballroom dancing while her hip was so painful. She'd felt trapped at home and felt lonely more often. She was worried about going home without a social activity to look forward to.

The team put her in touch with a **Community Connector** called Liz, based at the GP. Liz talked to Gladys about her interests and worries and was able to introduce her to the local Knit and Natter group at the village hall. The group are friendly and welcoming and **the village hall is bright and modern.**

In time Gladys recovers and returns to her dancing and she keeps up her Knit and Natter group. She is more active than before her operation and has made new friends

The Housing Solutions Team help people to access suitable housing and stay in their homes.

Community Connectors are part of a Social Prescribing programme. It connects people to activities to improve their wellbeing instead of using medical interventions. Referring Gladys is part of working together with our partners.

Village halls across the districts have received funding for refurbishment and modernisation through Community Infrastructure Levy, secured through Planning

Cecil

Older man living alone in a rural village
"I want to be with people, rather than sitting on my own at home".

Ages: 81
 Family: Widower with no children
 Living: Privately owned
 Occupations: Retired construction worker

Cecil came to Britain from the Caribbean in the 60s and worked for over 30 years in the building trade as a carpenter. Sadly, Cecil lost his wife 2 years ago and over the last decade the friends from his working life have passed away. His brother lives in London so and he doesn't get to see him very often.

Cecil has always been active and an upbeat personality, but recently he's been struggling to keep busy. When he sees that the local Men's Shed group is looking for volunteers with DIY skills, he decides to find out more.

The Men's Shed is new for Cecil, but he's pleased to be able to pick up his tools again and pass on some of his carpentry skills. He and the other volunteers make and mend for the local community, like making bird boxes for the local school.

Cecil's upbeat way is welcome at the group and he is soon friends with the other volunteers. Derek invites him to join him at the local walking group too. Once a week the group take a gentle walk and talk through the local park and nature area.

Cecil feels boosted by his new activities: it's good to have the extra push to get outdoors and the work at the Men's Shed is rewarding.

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The Men's Shed group is supported by Community Grant funding from the Councils

The Walking Group was set up with help and advice from the Communities Team

The Planning Team ensured the community land was created as part of new houses being built